fact that supplies need to be ensured to meet the requirement of States deficit in food production like Kerala is kept in mind while making any decision regarding allocation of food grains.

Demand/availability of Pulses

† 4283. Dr. D.MASTHAN:

SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH :

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that availability of pulses in the country is low in comparison to the demand;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the prices of pulses are also high due to excessive demand;

(c) if so, whether import facility has been provided into the country to keep the balance of demand and supply and to bring down the prices of pulses; and

(d) if so, the reasons for allowing the export of pulses from the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The gap between demand and supply of pulses exerts pressure on their prices.

(c) Import of pulses is allowed under OGL at zero import duty. The Government had also imported about one lakh tonnes of pulses during 1999-2000 to supplement the domestic availability of pulses in order to keep their prices at reasonable level.

(d) Export of pulses are allowed only in consumer packs of up to 5 kg and are consumed by the ethnic Indian population living abroad. The export of pulses forms only a small fraction of the total production of pulses in the country.

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.